



Monks Alley/Wicks Green Conservation Area

To: Binfield Parish Council

Dear Councillors,

I write to you on behalf of the members and committee of Binfield Village Protection Society. We originally approached Bracknell Forest Council in 2006 to request that this Wicks Green and Monks Alley be considered for designation as a Conservation Area.



An initial assessment was carried out by Jon Mullis, Principal Heritage Professional (Jacobs) for Bracknell Forest Borough Council. In his report he concluded that *'The area has a well-defined **special character** which includes a number of listed buildings as well as a number of buildings of local interest which it would be desirable to preserve. **We, therefore, fully support designation as a conservation area'***

A public meeting was held in September 2009 hosted by Ann Groves (BFC) and Eddie Booth MRTPI IHBC FSA – Director of The Conservation Studio, Gloucester. Mr Booth was employed by BFC to undertake the appraisal. At this meeting he discussed the various conservation areas that he had worked on in the past and explained the implications of a Conservation Area. A question and answer session followed and all attendees were asked to complete a questionnaire and complete a map showing where they felt the boundary should be. The questionnaire was also distributed to local households. It was also made available on Bracknell Forest Council's website. A large majority of the respondents to the questionnaire supported the principle of the designation.



During 2010, Bracknell Forest Council undertook a full appraisal report and this document now forms the basis of a public consultation to seek the views of local residents in Binfield and the Borough. The report identifies the boundary of the proposed conservation area and **highlights the special character and attributes considered worthy of preservation.**

We write today to place on record our full support for the designation of Wicks Green and Monks Alley and would like you to consider the following points in your deliberations:

1. This part of Binfield has a unique character and history with some buildings dating back to the 16th Century, as well as a number of buildings of architectural and historic importance. The area of Monks Alley and Wicks Green has 8 listings, more than any other part of the Binfield. These include Binfield Place (Grade II*), The White Gate (Grade II), Binfield House (Grade II), the Kicking Donkey (Grade II) and Wicks Green Cottages (Grade II).

PPG 15 PLANNING AND CONSERVATION (1.1) states:

“It is fundamental to the Government's policies for environmental stewardship that there should be effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment. The physical survivals of our past are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage and our sense of national identity. They are an irreplaceable record which contributes, through formal education and in many other ways, to our understanding of both the present and the past. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside. The historic environment is also of immense importance for leisure and recreation”.



2. Binfield is already under threat from large housing developments to the east and west of the village. With your help and support we can now secure extra protection from development and extra traffic in the north of the village, and help preserve these lovely rural lanes for future generations to enjoy.

Section 72 of the Act requires that *special attention shall be paid in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This requirement extends to all powers under the Planning Acts, not only those which relate directly to historic buildings. The desirability of preserving or enhancing the area should also, in the Secretary of State's view, be a material consideration in the planning authority's handling of development proposals which are outside the conservation area but would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area.*

3. Conservation area designation is not just about the buildings, it is about defining the character and understanding the history of the area and all the things that make it unique and worth preserving. The vicinity of the proposed conservation area includes historic paths, country lanes, gardens, village cricket green, Jubilee Fields, hedgerows, specimen and native trees, wild plants, wildlife, fields, ponds, rural views across the countryside, grass verges, and the buildings of historical and architectural interest.



4. It is a cherished neighbourhood which is very popular with local residents for outdoor recreation ranging from an evening stroll to enjoy the views, dog walking, riding, jogging, picnics and play in jubilee fields, through to a competitive game of cricket. Therefore, we believe that designation of the area should be based on the views of all Binfield residents, and especially those using and enjoying the proposed conservation area.
5. Designation does not prevent sensitive and necessary development in the area. But it does give added protection from inappropriate or large scale development. We have already seen proposals to build on Binfield's golf course despite it being designated as an "Open Space of Public Value" and an important "Local Gap" between Binfield Village and Bracknell. We would therefore be complacent to think that other open areas in and around the village are safe from development.

6. With reference to the area to be designated; we suggest that the walled garden & nursery of Binfield House should also be included as it is part of the curtilage of Binfield House and therefore part of the listing. (See PPG 15 – 3.30 – 3.31).
7. From a historic perspective we would like to see the modest triangular shaped field, bounded by Wicks Green, Goldridge Path and Ryman's Path, included in the designated area as this is the site of Binfield's original village green dating back to the 1800s.



Many residents have told us that they are very much in favour of this designation and believe that it is a good idea to protect this area of Binfield for future generations to enjoy.

We very much hope that Binfield Parish Council will recognise the time and effort which has gone into this appraisal and support the designation of this area for the future heritage and benefit of the local community.

Yours faithfully,

Margaret Foster

for Binfield Village Protection Society

February 12th, 2011



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS ARE OF THE PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA